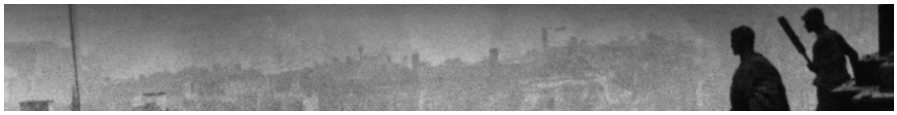

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‘Unacceptable and Wrong’: Google Admits to Censoring COVID Content Under Pressure From Biden Administration

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Originally published on www.childrenshealthdefense.org (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/google-admits-censored-covid-content-biden-administration-pressure-alphabet-letter/) by Michael Nevradakis, Ph.D.

Google admitted to censoring COVID-19 content on YouTube and deplatforming users under pressure from the Biden administration, calling the government's actions "unacceptable and wrong" in a letter to Congress on Tuesday. Google offered to reinstate banned accounts, but critics said the company continues to suppress content on other platforms, including its search engine.

Google on Tuesday admitted to censoring (https://judiciary.house.gov/media/press-releases/google-admits-censorship-under-biden-promises-end-bans-youtube-accounts) YouTube content that questioned official **COVID-19 (https://greenmedinfo.com/disease/coronavirus-disease-covid-19)** narratives — and deplatforming users who posted such material — under pressure from the Biden administration.

The admission came as part of an investigation by Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) into **Big Tech** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender_category/big-tech/) **censorship** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender_category/censorship-surveillance/) practices.

King & Spalding, the legal firm representing Alphabet Inc., the parent company of Google and YouTube, acknowledged the censorship in a **letter to Jordan** (https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-09-23-letter-to-hjc.pdf).

In the letter, Alphabet said the Biden administration's pressure to censor users was "unacceptable and wrong," and offered to reinstate users who were banned for allegedly violating YouTube's policies on **COVID-19** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender_category/covid/) and political speech.

Jordan issued subpoenas to Big Tech executives in **February 2023** (https://judiciary.house.gov/media/press-releases/chairman-jim-jordan-subpoenas-big-tech-executives) and **March 2025** (https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-03-06-jdj-to-pichai-alphabet-re-subpoena.pdf) as part of a broader investigation into the "**censorship-industrial complex** (https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/Censorship-Industrial-Complex-WH-Report_Appendix.pdf)," in which the Biden administration allegedly worked with Big Tech companies to "censor Americans," "true information" and critics of the administration.

Jordan previously chaired the U.S. House of Representatives' **Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government** (https://judiciary.house.gov/subcommittees/committee-judiciary-118th-congress/select-subcommittee-weaponization-federal).

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In a statement, Jordan's office said the investigation revealed that YouTube "was a direct participant in the **federal government's censorship regime** (https://judiciary.house.gov/media/press-releases/jordan-subpoenas-alphabet-documents-about-biden-harris-censorship-efforts-0)."

"In particular, the Committee obtained documents showing that the federal government successfully pressured YouTube to censor certain lawful content, including content that did not violate YouTube's content moderation policies," the statement read.

Alphabet's letter 'unprecedented,' despite no admission of wrongdoing

Mary Holland, CEO of **Children's Health Defense** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/) (CHD), which was deplatformed by YouTube during the COVID-19 pandemic, welcomed Alphabet's "unprecedented" admission.

She said:

> "I am not aware that anything comparable has happened in the recent past. I hope that it sets an example so that other legacy media and social media companies come forward to acknowledge how they caved to governmental pressure to censor speech during the Biden administration."

CHD General Counsel Kim Mack Rosenberg said Alphabet's letter "confirms in more detail what we previously knew or suspected." She said Alphabet, and YouTube specifically, "took steps to silence voices, including CHD's, that contradicted the prevailing COVID-19 narrative and the government's stance."

Tim Hinchliffe (https://sociable.co/author/timmy/), editor of The Sociable, noted that Alphabet "doesn't admit to any wrongdoing" in its letter.

According to Hinchliffe, while the letter "confirms what many already suspected after the '**Twitter Files** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/twitter-files-censorship-industrial-complex/)' were released — that the previous administration 'pressured' Big Tech companies into censoring posts that didn't violate their terms of service" — it does not clarify what the nature of this pressure was.

He said:

> "What isn't mentioned … is how the White House pressured Alphabet, and what did the company do in response? Did the administration threaten to repeal Section 230 immunity? Did Alphabet cave to the government's censorship, or did the company really act as a beacon of free expression as it has always claimed to be? Where is the documentation on all of this?"

Passed in 1996, **Section 230** (https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/47/230) of the **Communications Decency Act** (https://hbr.org/2021/08/its-time-to-update-section-230) grants internet providers and online platforms legal protections for hosting, moderating and removing most user content.

Attorney W. Scott McCollough suggested that Alphabet may be attempting to score political points. He said:

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> "I think what you are seeing from Google is a classic '**limited modified hangout** (https://www.definitions.net/definition/limited+hangout)' They are also, of course, trying to appease conservatives and especially President Donald Trump by shifting blame to Biden, even though it is fairly clear they were very aligned with those trying to censor disapproved narratives and voices at the time."

In 2023, Jordan released "**smoking gun docs** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/jim-jordan-white-house-facebook-censorship/)" confirming that Facebook and Instagram censored posts and changed their content moderation policies in response to pressure from the Biden administration. This included posts by now-U.S. health secretary and then-CHD chairman-on-leave **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/facebook-files-biden-censor-disinformation-dozen/)

Jordan's office did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

Biden administration created 'political atmosphere' in favor of censorship

In its letter, **Alphabet said** (https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2025-09-23-letter-to-hjc.pdf) the company "has a commitment to free expression."

However, the COVID-19 pandemic "was an unprecedented time in which online platforms had to reach decisions about how best to balance freedom of expression with responsibility, including responsibility with respect to the moderation of user-generated content that could result in real world harm," the company stated.

Alphabet "grappled with these decisions" while facing growing pressure from "Senior Biden Administration officials, including White House officials" to remove content that did not violate YouTube's terms of service.

"The Administration's officials, including President Biden, created a political atmosphere that sought to influence the actions of platforms based on their concerns regarding misinformation," the letter stated. This included "repeated and sustained outreach to Alphabet" regarding specific examples of content posted on YouTube.

Alphabet defended its practices, stating that YouTube "never had Community Guidelines prohibiting discussion of the **origins of the COVID-19 pandemic** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/white-house-website-declares-covid-escaped-wuhan-lab/)." Alphabet also said it ended some of its COVID-19 content policies in 2023 and eliminated them entirely last year.

"On key issues of medical content, YouTube policies continued to evolve in line with a dynamic environment," the letter stated. "Health authorities have changed their guidance over time and Alphabet's policies have evolved as well."

In 2023, **YouTube updated** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/medical-misinformation-policy-youtube-who/) its **medical misinformation policy** (https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/13813322), tightening restrictions on what it described as "harmful" claims about COVID-19, **vaccines (https://greenmedinfo.com/anti-therapeutic-action/vaccination-all)** and **cancer (https://greenmedinfo.com/disease/cancers-all)** treatments to align with the official positions of authorities, including the World Health Organization.

Hinchliffe noted that Google similarly "**partnered with the United Nations** (https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/google-search-information) to artificially manipulate search results about 'climate change' so that only U.N. resources would appear at the top."

Alphabet's letter also noted that, "In contrast to other large platforms," YouTube never operated "a fact-checking program."

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Meta — the parent company of **Facebook** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/facebook-fact-checkers-chd-meta-censorship-case-supreme-court/), Instagram and WhatsApp — did run such a program, but announced in January that it would end its fact-checking efforts.

In an interview on the "**Joe Rogan Experience** (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7k1ehaE0bdU)" that month, Meta CEO **Mark Zuckerberg** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/zuckerberg-white-house-facebook-staff-remove-covid-content-joe-rogan/) said Biden administration officials would "scream" and "curse" at Facebook staff and demand they remove COVID-19-related posts that didn't follow the government's narrative.

YouTube invites banned users to rejoin, but Google still limits reach of CHD content

In its letter, Alphabet pledged that "YouTube will provide an opportunity for all creators to rejoin the platform if the Company terminated their channels for repeated violations of COVID-19 and elections integrity policies that are no longer in effect."

Holland said CHD is considering returning to YouTube following the invitation. She said:

> "CHD is interested in reaching as broad an audience as possible with its valuable content, so we are considering all options to resume activity on YouTube as well as other major media platforms.
>
> "CHD is a strong proponent of the First Amendment. That is to protect hard speech in hard times, not consensus speech in easy times. CHD favors free expression as a prerequisite to health, freedom and democratic government."

However, Holland and Mack Rosenberg noted that other Alphabet platforms, including the Google search engine, continue to limit the reach of CHD's content.

Mack Rosenberg said:

> "Their admissions — which counsel carefully made clear was not a waiver of any of Alphabet's rights — come long after the damage to Children's Health Defense and other entities and individuals has been done. Indeed, that damage continues to today and CHD is carefully reviewing the letter and its options moving forward."

In a sample Google search today for "Children's Health Defense," CHD's homepage did not appear until the third page of results.

McCollough suggested that by merely limiting the reach of content, Alphabet may evade accusations of censorship.

"The tool may be programmed to not provide hits for content on the web, and by doing so, it limits folks' ability to find speech without removing or moderating any content or speech," McCollough said.

Holland suggested that safeguards are still needed to prevent similar censorship in the future. She said:

> "**CHD has been censored (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/facebook-instagram-de-platform-chd-childrens-health-defense-accounts/)** on every major platform since before the COVID-19 debacle began.
>
> "Alphabet censorship is consistent with the **censorship on Facebook (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/facebook-cdc-partnership-censor-misinformation/)** and every other major platform during the Biden administration. This reprehensible practice was induced by high-level government officials, and we still do not have adequate safeguards to ensure it never happens again."

CHD will 'continue to pursue other anti-censorship litigation'

Mack Rosenberg said that because there are no safeguards in place, CHD will "continue to pursue other anti-censorship litigation, including CHD v. Trump and the case against the **Trusted News Initiative** (https://www.bbc.co.uk/beyondfakenews/trusted-news-initiative/)" (TNI).

CHD v. Trump — formerly known as **Kennedy et al. v. Biden et al.** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/chd-lawsuit-consolidate-censorship-big-tech/) — alleges that the U.S. government "**waged a systematic, concerted campaign** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/lawsuit-rfk-jr-chd-biden-free-speech/)" to compel the nation's three largest social media platforms to censor constitutionally protected speech.

CHD et al. v. WP Company LLC et al. (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/Trusted-News-Initiative-Louisiana-Complaint-Dkt-1-05-31-2023.pdf) is an **antitrust lawsuit filed against several legacy news organizations** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/chd-lawsuit-media-louisiana/), arguing that TNI — founded by Reuters, The Washington Post, The Associated Press, the BBC and others — engaged in anticompetitive practices when its members colluded with tech platforms to censor alternative viewpoints on topics such as COVID-19.

In July, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a **statement of interest** (https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1407661/dl) backing CHD and the other plaintiffs in the case, suggesting that TNI **engaged in anticompetitive practices** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/doj-backs-childrens-health-defense-antitrust-suit-against-big-media/), in violation of the **Sherman Antitrust Act** (https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/sherman_antitrust_act).

"CHD will continue to vigorously seek to enforce the First Amendment's protection of free speech," Holland said.

In 2023, **Kennedy sued YouTube and Google** (https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/rfk-jr-lawsuit-youtube-google-first-amendment-rights/), alleging that, under pressure from the Biden administration, they violated his First Amendment rights by censoring several of his interviews. Last year, the **9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals** (https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/ca9/23-3411/23-3411-2024-08-26.html) dismissed the lawsuit.

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